

VZCZCXRO6046  
OO RUEHMA RUEHPA  
DE RUEHRY #0798/01 3641407  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
O 291407Z DEC 08 ZDK  
FM AMEMBASSY CONAKRY  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3263  
INFO RUEHZK/ECOWAS COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY 0567  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY  
RHMFISS/HQ USAFRICOM STUTTGART GE PRIORITY

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 CONAKRY 000798

SIPDIS  
SENSITIVE

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [ASEC](#) [KDEM](#) [PHUM](#) [GV](#)  
SUBJECT: CALM RESTORED, NEW GOVERNMENT MOVES FORWARD

REF: A. CONAKRY 0787  
[1](#)B. CONAKRY 0788  
[1](#)C. CONAKRY 0789  
[1](#)D. CONAKRY 0793  
[1](#)E. CONAKRY 0796  
[1](#)F. CONAKRY 0797

[1](#)1. (SBU) SUMMARY. Captain Moussa Dadis Camara has assumed control of the government, proclaiming himself president of the Republic of Guinea. The Council for Democracy and Development (CNDD) appears to be successfully consolidating and reinforcing its authority, although internal disagreements over the power structure continue. Civilian leaders seem to have accepted the CNDD and have started dialoguing with the new government regarding the need for a swift transition to a democratically elected civilian government. The country is calm with a normal level of public and commercial activity in the capital. The CNDD appears to be in the process of defining itself and the government, presenting a critical window of opportunity for the international community to influence events. END SUMMARY.

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CAMARA DECLARES HIMSELF PRESIDENT  
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[1](#)2. (U) President Conte's death on December 22 sparked an immediate military coup d'etat shortly after an official announcement at approximately 02:00 on December 23 (reftels). By the evening of December 24, the coup plotters had successfully seized control of the government and advised the population that Captain Moussa Dadis Camara would serve as the new president of the Republic of Guinea with two vice presidents, Brigadier General Mamadou "Toto" Camara and Lt. Colonel Sekouba Konate. The new Council for Democracy and Development (CNDD), comprised of 32 members including President Camara and the two vice presidents, has been serving as the defacto government since the morning of December 23.

[1](#)3. (U) The situation in Conakry throughout the coup was relatively calm, although tense. The city gradually started to return to normal activity on December 25 as fuel stations reopened and citizens began venturing out of their homes. After initially electing to cancel or divert regularly scheduled flights, commercial airlines began flying in and out of Conakry again on December 25, including Air France. By December 27, vehicle and pedestrian traffic had returned to normal levels, and most businesses were open as usual.

[1](#)4. (U) There were reports of heavy gunfire the evenings of December 24, 25, and 26, most of which seemed to be the result of military personnel firing into the air, either to celebrate, or to enforce a curfew. On December 26, the CNDD ordered the military to stop firing their guns, and threatened to summarily execute, without benefit of a

judicial process, any soldier responsible for killing another individual. The gunfire quickly abated and Embassy has not received any reports of such shooting since the December 26 announcement.

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PRESIDENT CONTE LAID TO REST  
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¶5. (U) The Charge went to First Lady Henriette Conte's residence at Camp Samory Toure on December 25 in order to offer official condolences for the president's death. Charge then attended the president's public funeral on December 26, which was also attended by the presidents of Liberia, Guinea-Bissau, Cote d'Ivoire, Sierra Leone, and the African Union. The funeral continued throughout the day, ending with the burial ceremony at the president's village of Wawa, located approximately 45 kilometers outside the capital.

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FORMER GOVERNMENT CEDES POWER  
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¶6. (SBU) Late in the evening of December 24, the CNDD invited former Prime Minister Souare and his ministers to report to Camp Alpha Yaya within 24 hours, which generated a number of inquiries to the international community, including Embassy, regarding political asylum. Available information suggests that some African embassies may have offered temporary refuge to former government officials. Souare and his government reported to Camp Alpha Yaya on December 25 at 12:00 where they were formally relieved of their duties. The

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former Minister of Decentralization, Naby Diakite, told Poloff that the meeting "went very well," and that he personally no longer felt threatened. During the meeting, Souare reportedly called Camara "Mr. President," and offered his services, and those of his ministers, to the CNDD in whatever capacity needed, saying that they all wanted to work for a better Guinea.

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CIVILIANS ACCEPT NEW LEADERSHIP  
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¶7. (SBU) The civilian reaction to the installation of the CNDD has been generally positive. Sidya Toure, a former prime minister and head of the opposition Union Force Republican (UFR) political party, told Poloff that "the transition is perhaps not as elegant as we would have wished, but we are moving forward." A high-level contact within the Rally for the Guinean People (RPG) opposition party told Pol LES that the RPG is ready to work with the CNDD and will push to have elections as quickly as possible, certainly before the end of 2009. Guinea's labor unions declared their support for the CNDD and requested that it allow a return to regular labor activities, which the CNDD had banned upon seizing power. Various other civil society organizations, including several human rights organizations, have also expressed their willingness to work with the CNDD, emphasizing the need for a quick return to civilian government through democratic elections.

¶8. (U) The CNDD invited civil society representatives to a meeting at Camp Samory Toure on December 27, which was widely attended. Embassy will continue to follow up with civil society leaders for reactions to the meeting.

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REACHING OUT TO THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY  
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¶9. (SBU) The CNDD also invited international community representatives to a meeting on December 27, which was subsequently rescheduled several times, and then ultimately

postponed until December 30. Embassy plans to attend, as do representatives from other diplomatic missions. Charge is hosting a meeting for the diplomatic corps to meet several members of the CNDD and to discuss various concerns on both sides.

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MOVING FORWARD  
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¶10. (U) Over the course of the weekend, the CNDD issued a number of declarations as the government continued to take shape. Beginning December 24, the CNDD instituted a city-wide curfew between the hours of 20:00 and 06:00, which they later suspended for the funeral, reinstated, and then ultimately suspended again in acquiescence to local leaders' requests. On December 25, the CNDD declared that all provincial governors and prefects were dismissed and were to be replaced with local military officers; also that secretary generals of existing ministries were to temporarily take control of their respective ministries until new ministers could be named.

¶11. (U) On December 25, the CNDD appointed Lieutenant Colonel Konate as the "provisional" Minister of Defense, and on December 27, appointed Brigadier General Toto Camara as the Minister of Security and Civil Protection. (COMMENT. Both of these officers were previously appointed as the two vice-presidents. They are now going to serve in both positions until new appointments are made. END COMMENT).

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COMMENT  
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¶12. (SBU) The CNDD appears to be consolidating and reinforcing its authority, although internal disagreement over the power structure continues. The civilian population seems to have generally accepted the CNDD with many contacts saying that they fully expected the military to step in and take control when the president died. They are looking for a swift civilian transition, but it is yet unclear what they expect a civilian transition to look like, or how hard they are willing to push to get one. The CNDD has reached out to the international community and requested assistance. The situation is fluid with the CNDD seeming to be in the process

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of defining itself and the government, presenting a critical window of opportunity for the international community to influence events. Embassy is submitting a proposal for a USG policy strategy via septel.  
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